



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Akron Police Officers Receive Red Cross Acts of Courage Award

Akron, Ohio (March 13, 2012) – On Tuesday March 6, 2012, three members of the Akron Police Department were presented with the Red Cross' Acts of Courage Award for their part in the successful rescue of a woman who was about to jump off the Akron Y-Bridge.

The Officers receiving the award were: Officers Janusz Jaskolka, Brent Bauknecht, and Sergeant Drew Kelly.

Specifically, on April 19, 2011 at 9:18 p.m., dispatchers received a call from a citizen about a possible jumper on the Akron Y-Bridge. The caller stated a woman was on the ledge and looked to be considering a jump to the ground below. Officers Janusz Jaskolka and Brent Bauknecht arrived first on scene and found a woman seated on the retaining wall outside the railing and facing out.

As the officers exited their cruiser, the woman spun her body around so that now she faced the officers and her arms draped over the rail at the arm pit. Her feet dangled in the wind. Sergeant Drew Kelly then arrived on scene to assist as another unit closed the bridge to approaching vehicles.

Sergeant Kelly, who has some experience with people with mental health problems, took over the dialogue. Looking over the wall himself, expecting to see scaffolding, he realized there was nothing between this woman and the ground 100 feet below. Sergeant Kelly asked if he could hold the woman's hand. At that point she reached out her hand in faith and he seized it. Officers Jaskolka and Bauknecht rushed to his aid. All three worked together to pull the woman back over the wall to safety, wedging themselves against anything they could to keep themselves from going over with the woman. They grabbed clothing, arms and belts and whatever else they could to pull her up.

"Yesterday I announced that seven Akron Firefighters received the Red Cross' Act of Courage award for their part in the successful rescue of two children in a house fire that occurred on September 15th, 2011, and seven other Akron Firefighters received Honorable Mention Awards for their part in the rescue of two individuals who were trapped in burning Sheridan Avenue house," said Mayor Don Plusquellic. "Today, I want to recognize the heroic actions of three members of our Akron Police Force, who risked their lives to save the life of one of our citizens in extreme distress. The situation these three officers faced was unpredictable and could have been disastrous. However, under extreme pressure, these Officers remained calm and diffused the situation as they are trained to do."

“I am so proud of my Officers,” said Akron Police Chief James Nice, who attended the Awards event with the Officers. “Because of these Officers, this woman got a second chance in life. We all hope she received the help she needed after this event.”

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